

A black and white portrait of a young man with dark, curly hair, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. He is wearing a light-colored shirt. The background is a plain, light gray.

The Survival Story of Anczel Cislowski

Our father, A gentle little giant of a man

**This book is dedicated to my grandchildren,
Benjamin Aaron, Bailey Solomon, & Amanda Naomi.**

And my great-grandson Zev Gabriel.

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Introduction

In all the years that we have known our father, he has always been very quiet about his past.

While many survivors would tell their stories to their families, Shoah Foundation, or write about their past lives, our father kept quiet. He would talk with other survivors, as they all did, but never to us.

Now, almost all of his survivor friends are gone. Their histories are gone with them.

Our father is the last of his generation in our extended family.

At the age of 87 Saba decided it was time to tell his story. He dictated his story from memory and tells this story so his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren can remember him as he is and was. Many details are missing because of time and space. Saba did not want to tell the stories of others. He wanted to tell us his story so we could remember him as a mischievous little boy and an amazingly lucky survivor. Street smarts, hard work, and luck were very important in the life of this man.

This story is his story in his words, only minimal editing was done to help the flow.

This is the story of Anczel Cislowski,

Our father,

The quiet little man with the piercing blue eyes.

~ David & Joseph

My name is Al Cislowski. When I was born, I had my name Anczel Cislowski. When I came to the United States my last name was spelled Scislowski. When I became citizen, I changed my name to Al Cislowski. I want to go through my history. I am now 88 years old in 2017 and I want to tell you about my life.

I was born December 1, 1928 to a family. There were already three boys and two girls, and I was the fourth boy. So, there were four boys, two girls. In beginning, the first two, three years, I didn't know what's going on, and later time I learned how was the life in Bodzentyn, Poland. And I want to tell what you what was life beginning at my birth. The thing is that I don't know if my family liked me or they disliked me, but I survived, and we were a nice family. Later until 1939. I can't remember what happened by year or by month, so I will take it when I describe from '28 to '39.

My father was a tailor for nine months of the year. For three months he rented orchards, fruit orchards. In July, August, September, we moved out to the orchards. And there was a room, a place to stay for the three months. In the orchard that we rented, we picked the fruit and sold them.

My city wasn't too big, but probably 75 percent were Jews living there. My father had a home there, and we were all in a two room home. Life in Bodzentyn was

very limited. We didn't have light in the city and also in the homes. No running water. No toilets. We had to go outside in the backyard. And that was our life.

I want to tell from my life how I was as a kid behaving. A lot of surprises. I was a kid like everybody there in Bodzentyn, and the kids didn't have toys, no games. We only created some of our games, like play with buttons and balls or make wars. When we got older, we had wars. One Sunday we took two groups. Everybody had rocks and we were throwing them around and breaking windows, and that was our pleasure.

And another surprise what could I tell happened with me: I was a kid that would surprise you. My father made me for the holidays a suit. It was a blue suit and I probably was seven, eight years old. And the holidays came and I was dressed in that new suit, and we were in the temple, the kids were playing outside and the grownups were praying. And I was restless. I came to my friend and I asked him if he could go to the castle in my city, a castle. We used to play all the time there. But this holiday, with the new suit, we went to the castle. Took ten minutes to get there. When we get to the castle, from the street was level with the long, big field filled with grass. And from the front street, took maybe five minutes or ten minutes to get to the end of the castle. And the end of the castle was not straight; was a slope to go down a long time. So, we decide... And down below was a river going. So, we went, start to go

walk down. So, we laid down and roll five, ten minutes until we got to the river. And we did a few times like that, and then we said let's go back to the shul. And it was approximately three o'clock in the daytime, and everybody was finished with praying. They went home. So, I went home and parents ask me, "Where you been?" I said, "Oh, in the castle." And they looked on me and looked on me. You know what happened? "No, your suit is, instead blue, green!" My suit got green from the grass we rolled down, and we couldn't do nothing with the suit and had to probably throw away. And I don't know...remember if I got punished or not, but I'm sure I did. And days went by, and things were forgotten. I also, when a kid, was going on the roofs and trees and fences, and I was not scared in catching pigeons. And this is the way we had to live in that little city because not too much entertainment.

And I went also to school. I was going to public school half a day, and then half a day in the Jewish Cheder. That's a Jewish school. We learned to pray, to write Yiddish, and what is going on. But also, kids are kids. We were talking in the Cheder, in the school, the Jewish school. Kids were kids, talking, so the rabbi got mad at me and called me to him, and asked, "Why are you making so much noise?" And he had a belt and, you know, hit me a few times. And then I got back to my chair. And a few days went by. I wrote a note and passed it around. The rabbi, he was mad. He wanted

to know who wrote this. I wrote him that I will catch him in the street, I will kill him. So, he wanted to know who did it. So, he was probably a smart guy and told everyone a few days later. He said, "We're going to write a letter to a sick man." And okay, but he wanted to find out who, by mistake or they didn't spell right and see the handwriting, and he got me. He knew that I did it. Okay. And then he complained to my father that I did this and this. And time went by again. And it was all the kinds of occasions like that. Like, one time another rabbi wanted to go to this school, so I went to another school.

And I did another foolish thing. One day, I talk also to a friend. "Let's go in the forest." We picked berries and mushrooms because I used to go – with my sisters in summer to pick mushrooms. But it was a half a day's walking to there. So, at halfway we said, oh, we're tired. Let's go home. So, we turned around – no berries, no mushrooms – and I came back to the school. And the rabbi ask, "Where you guys been? You know what it is time now? It's about three o'clock. You're almost going home." So, and the same thing. He took...got me by the ear and pulled by the ear and almost torn off the ear. And I didn't want to go to school, to the Cheder because he was mean to me, but the parents didn't let through that and I had to go back. They pulled me. They took me on the arms and took me back to school one day. And I got stuck again.

So... in the meantime, it was every year, we went three months to the orchard and we lived there three months. And I didn't have lot to do there too much, so I climbed the trees and I learned all the names of the trees from the orchard – the apples, the plums, and pears. I knew all the names of them. So, that's what was. Every year the same thing. And there was also a river where I tried to catch fish. So, one day I took a stick. We went fishing, spending half a day, but no fish. And this way it went almost three months – boring. But I had to go with my father and mother, I didn't have other choice.

So, came 1939, we were ready to go home. And Poland was at war with Germany, and they occupied Poland – 1939 September. And while we were still packing and making arrangement with the horse and buggy to put our things and going home, I heard my brothers and my parents talking that Hitler was saying on the radio or somewhere else, and they're talking that Hitler said he's going to kill all the Jews. So, you can imagine. I was 11 years old. I got scared and I had fears, and I didn't know what to say. And I had to live with this fear, what it. We came home, in September 1939 in the city.

The Germans were already in my city, but they didn't bother us yet. But we were already different people – scary. And it went by... And we started school again. In public school, I start half a day, and half a day in Hebrew school. And passed by, let's say, five, six months. Then they closed the public school for the Jews. The Jews

couldn't go in school anymore. But the Jewish schools were somehow open still, and that's what we spent. In the city, city at the time, they made a curfew that we couldn't go out of the city. We only could go so much in the city. They made a point to where we could walk. And we couldn't go out already after five. We were supposed to be in the homes. And only way to sit home, six, eight people in the night by kerosene lights, candles, and talking about the war, talking other things. And I didn't have a say too much, but I listened. This happen here, this happen there. Everything bad things. And we didn't have, at that time, no radio and no television yet. Sit in the daytime outside or be in the school. Was very crowded.

in 1941, we decided that we would go out to a farm. I don't know that people, Jews could go out, buy food, from the Polacks, Polish people could come in and buy from us, merchants, suits or other things what they didn't have. So, one night, my father packed everything. Took pillows, covers, and all kinds of clothing, and food. The farmer talked over with my father that he would hide us, and we pay him for that. And he also was a good customer with my father. He always brought things to repair, to buy – suits. And they talk over that he should do that, but he did it and he said to my father, "Yeah, come out, but not all of you one time." So, my father decided to take mother and my sister. She was older three years from me. And then I was by myself. So we

were two young kids, and the parents. And that time, I was 13 years old. My sister was 15 years old.

Okay, one night we got to the place, to the farmer. And what? You won't believe it, three tall guys, Polish guys with sticks asked my father, "What you guys doing here?" So, my father tried just to tell them all kind of stuff. And the guys took away everything what we got belong – the money, the merchandise...the clothing. And he said to us, "If you're not going back today, we kill you like nobody's business." So, that was the first problem. And we waited until the evening. We had nothing left. We try to get back home, and we came home.

We find all the brothers and older sister in the house. And we kept doing things, and everything in very bad shape. I don't know if the farmer told the...brought those guys to scare us or they came along. I don't know how otherwise they would know that we here. Okay, was back to Bodzentyn and it was all kind things.

In 1942, they brought in Jews from another city, and everybody from the homes had to give away a room. So, we had to give a room, so we...eight people had to live in one room, and the newcomers, they got a room to live. Two people, three people, four people in one room

It was crowded everywhere. They put up kitchens and made us to give the soup because no way otherwise we had food there. But some kids still wanted to live

and they played all kind made-up games. . Before that, you know, the city were talking “They’re going to take us to kill us and burn us in Majdanek, other places where crematoriums were. They burned lot of Jews.” And that’s what we heard talking.

And, you know, people were sad, but my father decided another thing. My mother had a sister in Starachowice, a city that was a ghetto, and people worked in an ammunition factory. They said whoever will work in the factory, maybe they’re going to be spared from sending us out from the city. So, one day we decided, again. Starachowice was a whole day traveling by horse. We took all the rest what we had, clothes and things, and we sneaked in to the ghetto Starachowice. We went with my mother and the sisters and I, and all the brothers and sisters came after another day. We didn’t want to travel at one time. I don’t know how we got in. It still was open, the ghetto, for the Jews, and they could go in or out. I don’t remember this. But we made it. We came to Starachowice. In Starachowice, we came to the aunt. She had one room by a station, bus station and she lived in that station because Jews already lived separate from the Polish people. The Polish people then had to move from the Jewish sections, and the Jews had to move from the Polish sections, and we were living only Jews in the ghetto.

Okay, we lived in ghetto. And what else? What we do? So, the brothers and the father and the mother, they

went to register to go to work. The work was we made ammunitions in the factory. But they went through the register. They got passes to go to work. And I was, in 1942, yeah. I was 14 years old. I came to the window and I want to register also to go to work. It was a place we had to work night shift and day shift – 12 hours in the night, 12 hours in the daytime. And I came to the window of the register, and the man says... He looked at me. "What you doing here? You are a baby. Go home. How old are you?" So, I said, "14." "No, we don't hire 14-years kids." Now I left, so passed a few week or two. I went back to register and then I was lying. They ask me what age I am. I said seventeen and a half, so he let me through. He gave me also a pass.

And so was that in the daytime. I worked in the daytime with my father. The brothers, they worked night shift. And was going on for three, four months. In three, four months, they decided to liquidate the ghetto, to send the people to die. And I and my father worked night shift then. In night shift, in one night, we worked. In the daytime the next day, they didn't let us to go back to the ghetto. They made barracks not far from the factory and we went straight to the barracks because they needed us to work. And in the daytime, people, those people didn't go to work. They stayed in the ghetto. And they made a selection in the ghetto – who worked in the day shift. You had to go in one corner. Kids and mothers, small kids and mothers go in the

other corner, and older people in other corner, sick people in other corner. So, they took the day shift to the barracks where we were staying. A few days passed. The other people were staying two or three days, and they brought big trucks and took all of them on the trucks to the train and put everybody on the train, whoever was left in the ghetto. So, that's what was it. And they took them away. And then we went back to work the next day.

My brother Avram went into the woods to hide with two friends that were brothers. The stayed there for some time. When Avram came out to try and buy some food, he was shot and killed.

In 1943 I was then 15 years old and happened that year when one day, we come back from the work, the night shift. The day shift didn't go already to work. They all standing outside the barracks in the line, three people in the line, and they start looking around in between the people, where they find that who was sick or old, they try to take them out, and then they did same thing with the night shift. And I was picked out to go with the sick people. Then and they went to the barracks and looked around, to see if somebody was hiding, they took him out to send him away to die.

When they picked me up, out from the line, I was almost the last one. They cut out all the people that they wanted to take away. There were sick people, old

people, and they're sitting in the side, waiting for the trucks to pick us up. Okay, the truck came, and they start loading people that are chosen to die and start loading them up on the truck. And the front, we were stretched; I don't know how much, how many feet from the front to the end. Okay, they started loading them. So, one man, I don't know if he was sick, or didn't want to go up on the truck, so he cried and yelled, so all the guards went in the front to help to put him up on the truck. And I was the last one, so I saw this. So, I ran into my barrack on the bed, and my heart was pounding so fast that I thought the heart jumps out from the body. And then I was laying quietly and they took away all of them with the truck, and the rest of people went back into the barracks. It was the next day, everybody went to work, and I went to work, too, and that's what it was. I don't know how my mind worked that luck worked with me, and everything that I did was right, and I survived. I don't know how I got the courage to go through. The days would go by, the same thing. People didn't have enough food. We were weak to work, but we went to work. So, it was a miserable life.

So, they went and if I wouldn't have worked that night, I probably wouldn't go through the selection. So, I was lucky again. I survived. Finally, I worked in the night. And they took three or four days and they cleaned out the people that had to be sent away to, I don't know, Treblinka or Majdanek. And they cleaned out for three, four days, and we didn't go to work anymore. And in

the daytime, they didn't go to work until they took out the healthy people to go back to the work. So, they brought them to our place in the barracks and took probably four or five days. They took all the people that were going to die. And the ghetto was liquidated. When we started working, we worked in an ammunition factory. We made bullets and all kind stuff what we didn't understood.

In 1943, it got around the end of the year, about November. So, I got sick with typhus, and I was in the barrack, what they called the hospital. And I was there with high fever and didn't know what was going on in that barrack. One night, they announced that everybody has to go down from the barracks down to the place where they always got together, and they stand again in lines, and it was around seven, eight in the night, and I had a brother Aaron there also in another barrack, so he understood there's something going on. So, he ran to me in the hospital and took me down to the people who stood in the line, and my father was alive. He stood in the front, and I was in the middle, and they hold me and the brother behind me, that I shouldn't fall and stay in the line straight. Okay. So, what happened? Then everybody was down below in the place what we were standing, so they went up in the barracks, checked the barracks, where anybody couldn't go down, so they shot them, and they went into that hospital and they shot all who were sick, and

I would be there. If not my brother, I would not survive. I was very close to Aaron. He would take care of me. I always stopped by his place in the barracks. One time they told me he was not there anymore. They told me that he was taken on a detail to dig holes to bury the people that were sick or selected to be killed. After they buried the dead, they shot the workers on the detail and put them in the same hole. He was one of them.

And that was going on every time, new surprises. Okay, and that was the end of '43.

And that is how it went until 1944. I was 16 years old, and they planned to take us away because they were afraid the Russians will come close, and they wanted to take us with them. So, they brought trucks and people went up on the trucks, and they took us going for four or five days on the train to Birkenau. And that's a long story again. People didn't know what to think, where they're going to take us.

And I was only 16 years and then my father was... While we were ready to go on the train, on the trucks, somehow he was not in the right place. He got shot. So, myself, I survived that, taking care of myself. Not that somebody could help, but more help would be fine.

In September 1944, I was 16 years old. I was transferred from Starachowice, around September. They stopped the factories and they took all of the prisoners to the

train, we didn't know where we were going. They didn't tell us anything. And we just prayed we're going in the right place because it took us four days and nights to get to Birkenau. We noticed that on the way. And we came, we saw the gates and the wire, electric wires that gated the whole area with prisoners. So, I don't know. I call them prisoners. So, we arrived in Birkenau and we saw the crematoriums, so we all were very shocked and scared. But we were somehow lucky. When you arrive, they cut your hair, going through the showers where they used also gas to gas the people. And we got cut the hair and we understood already, if they cut the hair, it must be you're going to survive. And then we went through the showers and it was water not gas, so we were happy. And we went out on the other side, and they were already waiting for us on the other side, the Gestapo and the guards. And they started looking on us. We came from a factory. That's why they wanted to spare us, to keep working other places. Why they left Starachowice is because the Russians came close to the border, so they still had time and they had to take us again to other places. In Birkenau and they took us and they sprayed us against lice. They give us clothing. They didn't select through the people. They had only the clothes and they didn't try to fit to the person the clothes. They just give you a package with the clothing, and we were told you got a small package and small pants, and we had to go between us and see who could change with you. And that took time, and

we were so hungry, starving for so many days.

And then came already the evening. They took us to a camp, what they call gypsy place. They took us there. In one half there were gypsies and one half of the camp was empty, so we went in those barracks. And the next day, they took the people. They tattooed us. They made numbers on our arms and everybody got a number. And my number was A18846. And they tattooed everybody and we went back to the barracks. And that was the end. But then later on, a few days, they start to make lists – who is a painter, who is a shoemaker, who is a builder, who is an electrician, who is a plumber. And they made lists like that. At that time I was 16 years old, and we didn't have any trades, so they didn't register us. But when they took away all the others, all the professions that they selected, they took them away to places. We didn't know where, what. But one of the lists they made of the trades got lost. So when they made a new list we mingled in with them and we went through another registration, and I was added to a list for work. And the day after, they took us across the wires. There were other camps, barracks. And they took us, and we went on the other side, and they called the barrack D. They didn't give us any jobs yet. And then three, four days after, we passed from the gypsy's camp. So, we heard all the gypsies say, whoever was left they went in the crematorium and burned all the families, the gypsies and whatever.

If we would've stayed there, we would have the same thing. We would go in the crematoriums.

But time went by and we started getting jobs. We were approximately 60 people. Every day they found jobs for us, fixing the roads. There was a lot, with all the broken airplanes that were shot down. They brought with trucks and they piled big stacks because they wanted probably later take this to recycle it. And we worked about five months there in '44.

And then we don't know the reason, but they had a way to do things that never knew. They took us to Stutthof. That's also a camp where they used to have crematoriums. And when we arrived there, they only burned sick people, dead people, and we were in the barracks again. So, you imagine what we went through. When I was only 16 years old and with so many years in all the camps.

So, went by a few months. Germans came from farms, and they picked some people to go to work there. It was a little easy already because the farms gave a little bit more to eat. But good things come to an end. We finished the work and they sent us back to Stutthof. In Stutthof, again, was a small airport. It was private or army, we didn't know. And we also worked with concrete, and it was miserable. The rains fell, we got wet. We worked in the open. We didn't work under a roof. And all this, and it was very miserable. We came

home after work. You didn't know how to dry the clothes. You went to sleep in wet clothes. And then come the next day, you had to go to work. And that was the life of our people.

In 1945, they transferred us to Allach. Allach was a camp that belonged to another camp, Dachau. But they brought us up there because probably the Americans started coming closer to the area. So, they took us one evening, again, and put us on trains, transport trains. And the night was so lit up with the bombs that fell on the area and shooting from the airplanes. But we got lucky. We went through that and we went on the train. And so what did they have in mind? To take us to a river and somehow throw us in the river. But the Americans bombed the railroads and they couldn't go farther. So, we went forward and back, forward and back. And the Americans didn't know that we are on the trains. A few people, our people got injured. The next day came and the Germans escaped. They knew what's going on, so they left us alone. We didn't know what to do. So, that time, people, went out to look for clothes and for food. The next day, they came, the Americans, and they tried to give us food. They made the kitchens and they cooked for us. And we were still sleeping on the train, and we were a few days with nothing to do.

And so a few days, they came with big trucks and they took us away from that place. It was called Staltach. They took us on trucks and they came and they put

us in Landsberg am Lech again in another camp. We thought we're going to be liberated, they're going to give us everything and they won't know what to do. We are in a camp again. Imagine, after so many hardships and go through camps, and they put us in camps again. And there was already food for everybody, whoever came. We were maybe three, four hundred people and we were very miserable again. They didn't even have doctors to check us, we were malnourished, hungry, and skinny. The Americans didn't even check us if we healthy or know what to do with us, what diet we eat. Some people ate the cooked, greasy food. Some people ate and they got diarrhea and they died. And somehow, I was lucky. I went through with the hardship and I didn't get sick.

So, now we in '45, we were in Landsberg am Lech, and we were freed. And now what to do? We didn't want to go home. They asked us where we wanted to go, so everybody had an idea. To Poland, nobody wanted to go back. We didn't have a good experience there. So, we said we're going to go to Israel. Through the time, people came from Israel with ideas to register for Israel. Someone wanted to go to America. So, this way they were busy with the lists. So, we, again, we are in a camp again. So, I and other kids my age wanted to go to Israel. I was probably 17 years old then. So, some trucks came from a Jewish organization. From Germany, we tried to go through to Italia, and from

there somehow to take a boat to get to Israel. But this wasn't so easy. We were moved from one place to the other in Italy – Modena, Napoli, Milan, and Castel Gandolfo, where the Pope had the summer house. And we got food again. We were saying, oh, we're going tomorrow to go to Israel, and that took maybe almost nine months until this happened. So, we were moved around and moved around, Santa Maria. We grew up in the camps. No education since the war broke out.

One day, they set up the people from Israel. They knew what to do. They bought fishing boats and they remodeled them. They took out everything from the ship on the bottom. They made beds to sleep, three beds in height. If you had to go in, you had to lay down to slide in the bed – so tight. And so they put a big boat, fishing boat, and they fixed it up. They put it in middle in the ocean, and then they took little boats of ten people each. We were 1,500 people and they brought us to the mothership, and everybody went up. It took maybe a day or a night because they didn't want to advertise what we were doing. Because the English knew that we were doing those things, we were going not legally. So, we did it in the night, I think. Anyway, we went up to the ship. Everybody was already on about 1,500 people. And the captain of the ship was Italian and he headed the boat to Israel.

We started traveling in middle of the ocean. People threw up, got sick. What usually takes three days to

go from Milan to Israel; it took us 11 days. And we came close to the shores, to Palestine. The English, they watched over Palestine. They allowed only 1,500 certificates for the survivors every month. So, every month, people who came before us were let in first. So, they built a big camp in Cyprus and they put up tents, and there were already some camps with people. So, the British ships found us and we fought with them. In the neutral waters, they couldn't do nothing to us, but we came close to Haifa. They told us to surrender, we didn't want to surrender. We argued with them. We yelled to them, begging. It didn't help. Four ships, English ships came and put us in a box. We couldn't go out or in. We got tired fighting, so they came up and they took the people off to the big ship. Four big ships took what we were in that little ship. They took us to Cyprus, in a camp, our camp was 62. And before that was 61, 60. Back, back, back.

We had to wait until our turn to get out of Cyprus to Israel. So, it was about 1946. I was about 18 years already. They kept us maybe about ten months until it came to us. But they didn't even check us. They didn't... Nobody cared if we were alive. We had to suffer now from the English people. They didn't let us into Israel. They closed us up, they brought in big trucks water, food. But we couldn't go out from the camp. And here, again, suffering, being in the heat. In Cyprus it was hot, sitting in the tents. And nothing to do. And

the same thing – making us suffer. But, thanks God, food we had, but no freedom. And what did we do? We had to suffer again.

Then came 1946, around the end. That was '46, maybe December or something. So, here we go again. They took us already to let us into Israel. They took us also in big ships and brought us to Israel. And guess what? They closed us up in Israel too. They made a camp. Israel still had deserts. They put up a camp again for another month because it wasn't time to go into Israel. So, we here again, and what can you do? We suffered again. It was already 1947, and I was already 19 years old. You imagine for so many years to be out and I grew up all those years in camps. No education, no brothers, no families. It was then in 1947, they released us to another camp, but this camp was already not guarded. It was a camp only. That was Camp Atlit. That was also a camp from the British. They had beds and things. We were settled for another month. Then came advisers who asked who was going here or there, who was to go to private, who maybe kids there, or people who came a little earlier, or if they wanted to go to kibbutzim. They took the kibbutz people in trucks. Then came the people that had relatives, and they went out. So, I was with the people who wanted to go on their own in the city.

We were three guys. We got together in the camp, and they took us. We didn't know where we're going. They

brought us to Netanya. Netanya is a city now, but at that time, when I came, it was all desert. They took us to a family, and the family rented a room for three people. The toilets and the showers we had to share with the owner. The Sochnut, the Jewish Agency. People took care of us. We got a \$48 fund and an army bed, pillow, and a blanket. So, we were three. And then what? It was hot, when we came, it was already May '47. So, it then starts again. We had to go and eat like poor people, because we couldn't afford to buy too much. And we ate bread, eggs, and some cheese or salami. We never ate a cooked meal. So, we started to worry about work, how are we going to get some work, we don't have a profession. Our life was concentration camps, we didn't have where to learn, where to be educated. We didn't know anything to do, we were just people.

One week we went to the place where they're giving jobs, what they call it, Liskat Avoda, Israel Employment Office. Each of us three got a day's work a week. The first work was to put a roof, a concrete roof on a home. But all the jobs were pour concrete. So, I didn't know what to do. I didn't mix cement. We very malnourished still, not healthy to do this hard work. But somehow, we worked around them, and from the morning till the night, we finished the roof. So, they made a party. They brought in sandwiches, they brought in beer, and other things, fruit, and we ate, we got drunk, and we hardly could go home. So, the next day, we were sick, and

again, we survived. And we waited every time for another job, so we did something to clean the city, the streets, sometimes here, and that was our life. One of us, one of our three friends found a girl and he got married. So, he left us two. Lonesome, no friends, nowhere to go, nowhere to ask. And we were sitting in the room all day, in the heat, in Netanya. So here's what we did. We were there about three months. The other friend left also. I didn't know what, he got connections somewhere in Tel Aviv, and I was left alone. So, one day, I heard that some of the kids I knew from the concentration camps were in Tel Aviv. After the liberation we were together.

So, I took the bus, and I went to Tel Aviv. This friend lived in Tel Aviv- Yafo. Tel Aviv- Yafo was connecting Tel Aviv with Yafo. And I got a hold of him. So, what happened? One night, I slept here, and one night I slept here. Nobody could help you, you had to fight for everything. One day, I heard somebody was looking for a dishwasher to wash dishes. There were no dishwashing machines at that time. That was in '47 in Israel. Nobody knew what was an electric dishwasher, just people washing dishes for the restaurants. What can I do? I don't have too much money and I have to work. So, came one day and I started working. I washed the dishes. I couldn't keep up with the needs of the dishes, and it took a few days and I got miserable, then came end of the week, the boss talked to me in the restaurant. He called me. He said, "My friend, you're

too slow for that. You're too weak to do this." You have to constantly wash and rinse and wash and rinse and dry. Only one guy to do the job." Okay. So, I was again without work. So, later on, listening between the friends, somebody's looking to deliver from a coffee shop to offices a block away. The Turkish coffee is a small cup and so strong, they used to order for the office and a glass of water with that. And that was so strong you couldn't drink it. Okay, they gave me the job. The offices didn't have elevators two floors, three floors. I start running, looking for the numbers of the office, and then going back and this, till I got it, and it was already cold, the coffee, and this, and have spilled maybe. And I went back to the coffee shop and they tried again gave me another place, until I found the building number, until I found the number of the office. It happened the same thing come back, go back. Come back, he said, "Goodbye, No job for you. You're not able to do this."

And here we go again, nothing to do nowhere to go. Nowhere to go where they took care of you. I didn't know who or where to go for help. They couldn't help you either, because they didn't have apartments, because a lot of people came into Israel every month by 1,500-2,000, people. There were already people before me that looked for jobs and looked for shelter. But I moved around between my friends. And then a friend who already got a job. What was his job? He found a

friend from Europe. They lived in one place. The friend had an empty lot with a partner. And they collected papers. People brought papers to him.. That friend had a bike with three wheels. He got up in the mornings, early while everybody was asleep. He got around in the allies, where people took down the trash, the night before. He picked up cardboard, boxes, paper, office paper. And, he got paid by kilo, by weight. So he got money. He also did transportation. If somebody needed a package to deliver here or there. So he did that and also some delivery by foot. And then I helped him with that paper.

I asked him, maybe you know somebody who has a job for me. So, he said, "Oh, my partner is looking for a guy who could start learning cabinetmaking." Fine. I was handy. I went home. And I went to him. He said, "I can't pay you too much, but maybe it'd be enough for some food." Okay. I worked already, start working, and I worked. He had a cabinet shop, as big as a kitchen. And that's what he worked and I worked with him. What were the jobs? We did repairing things, like radios, chairs that somebody had to fix. He explained to me what to do. I caught on very fast. That was 1947. I was 19 years old, and I tried to start a profession. I was happy already, with some money. I worked there till 1948. He gave me some jobs to do on my own so I could make a little bit more money.

And then one night, I was in in Kikar Allenby in Tel Aviv.

A big place, walking around. And we were expecting to hear that Israel would become a state. And on the night, '48 in May was it, and we started to hear from the Ram Kol (loudspeaker) and from radios, that we were accepted to the United Nations to be a state. There were parties, jumping around, dancing.

Okay, a few days passed. They started getting to work on an army. So, I was at the age to go to the army. I was already 20 years old. And I was happy to go to the army, they gave clothes and shoes and food and I wouldn't have to worry. So, they told us to register, this age here, this age there. So I went to the station and I was registered. The next day I went to that place. There were already other soldiers. And we got into big trucks and they took us to Emek Yizrael (Valley of Jezreel) in Kibbutz Beit Kfar Yeheskel. They divided us between the kibbutzim between different people to take care of us with food. We exercised there, made exercises to be a soldier.

The Arabs started fighting in Zrain. Machane Gidon was what the English left, a big camp. People had come from all over. One day, we made a kvutzah (group). They called us Gidut 13. And we had a name. We started right away. We heard already the Arabs attacked here, attacked there. I still did not go out of the camp. We hardly learned how to shoot a rifle or other things. One night, they took us to another kibbutz. It was not far from Nazareth. We came there in the night. The Arabs

were shooting at us, but thanks God we got through to that kibbutz. We had in mind that we were going to conquer the Nazareth. The Arabs ran away some of them. Some of them got killed. And we took Nazareth. Oh well. So, we're staying in Nazareth. We put up tents.

So, then came 1948. We were fighting all over. We were still fighting in the Emek, in Nazareth, in Negev.

An Arab airplane bombed the road from Afula to Beit Shaan that we were trying to keep open. I was wounded there. I got injured in the hand, and I have still shrapnel in my forehead.



In 1948, I was in Camp Julius. It was not far from Tel Aviv. I was with all the friends from the camp, and they had a friend who lived in Tel Aviv-Yafo. He already had a room with a living room. He was an older man already, and he had a sister. She had a lot of girlfriends. So, they came to visit that friend. He had a big den, and we always came down, and everybody brought something special for Friday and Saturday. We were released from the Army to go in to the city. I had a Patiphone (hand cranked record player) to play records. There were no electrical record players. I remember I bought it for 20 Lira (Israeli pounds). And we had fun, we danced with girls and boys, and Bela and I got together, and I got together with the sisters and the brothers. Bela and I got close, and we were going awhile.

In 1949 I came out of the Army. So, the brother said, "You know what? Why don't you guys get married? Because pretty soon Bela," my friend, "has to go in the Army soon if you don't get married." He promised we could stay with him. I didn't have money. Even if I wanted to get married, I would never marry, because no money, no apartment. I still lived with a friend in that apartment. And no way, no way, no way. But he talked us into it. He said you're going to stay in that room till you get well, get money, and no worries. Okay. What can I lose? And we needed friends. We were alone. At that time, I was 21.

In 1950 we got married. The wedding was on a roof. We didn't have enough for more. I had a sister, Rushka, also. She came after me half a year to Israel, and my future wife Bela, she had also a sister, Mala. I wanted to make a party, buy a cake, buy this, and seats. At that time there was Tzena (rationing). Everything you would buy was on rations, on coupons. And they didn't have enough coupons to buy flour, sugar to make cakes or anything. Anyway, something worked out, and I had friends, and she had friends. We made a wedding.



Bela worked already as a nurse. I had a little experience to be a cabinetmaker, but I got more experience. They did Politura (finishing with shellac) to shine the furniture. They didn't know how to spray like in America. I started practicing in Politura, and I slowly learned that. So, I made also the minimum, and we made a survival. Imagine how I was 22 years got married young, in so much pain, in sicknesses, and not able to see a doctor, all those years. But it looks like to survive there is a drive in you. You were driven to life, to keep going, not to give up. I've been through so many years, miserable.

So, we were married and we lived in the apartment. We were married five or six months. It was in 1951 and I was 23 years old. In the meantime, Bela got pregnant and I was happy. After a few months, we got a surprise from my brother-in-law. He said he needs the apartment and we should leave because he found a woman and he wanted to get married. So, here we are again. We have no money. It was hard to find an apartment. When you saved money, when you had already 500 Lira, the apartment what you wanted to rent cost already 1,000 to 1,500 Lira. We could never catch up. But anyway, the problem was that Israel didn't have enough homes and apartments that you could rent because a lot of people came in and, almost for everything, you had to bribe the one that moves out. They called it under-the-table money, and when he moved out, he charged

whoever wanted to rent, he charged them, let's say, 1,000 Lira...1'500 Lira, I mean. And we never could reach up to find an apartment.

So, what happened now? He gave us a hard time and we fought, but he locked us out. And here we are again, with a problem. So, what do we do? The next door neighbor, our friend, lived in one bedroom, so he let us stay for while in the room, and it was miserable for everybody. I had a sister. She came also as a survivor from Germany in 1949. She came with her husband. They had some bikes and electrical stuff, electric oven. They had to sell everything to get an apartment. What they got for that money was only one bedroom, not a bedroom, a room, and there was a closet in the room. He was a tailor. He had a sewing machine in one room. The kitchen and toilet and the shower, they had to share with other people. But when it came the time that we needed, what we can do? We had to go.

So, we went to my sister Rushka to live. But meantime, before that, I had a cousin in Ra'anana, and he came to visit her and we asked the cousin to find out if you could rent an apartment in Ra'anana. But in Ra'anana there was also a problem to get an apartment. He heard that one owner was building a home and he didn't have money enough to finish it. He wanted a sum for a year rent and we would move in one room – not a bedroom, one room. And I built a little kitchen to the room and we were waiting till we got that room. It took a while.

That was in 1951.

In the meantime, my wife was miserable. She stayed in Tel Aviv. I was in Ra'anana, sleeping, working a little bit there, and waiting for the apartment. I would go to Tel Aviv on weekends. But she was miserable. She came to me a little for one day, went back, and she couldn't find a place. What to do? Pregnant, hot. And I, for the weekend, come out to Tel Aviv to my sister. We had spent a weekend in her house. And it was hot. We couldn't catch up. In the meantime, the room was ready, so we could move in already. We moved into the room. That was in 1951. And we waited till the child would be born. And what can I tell you? After so many years, miserable and problems and torture, we had to put up again in 1951.

And one day we were ready to have the baby, so we took a long walk on a Saturday. We went for a walk in the city. It was a big street Achuza. It went from Herzelia to Kfar Saba. And we were in middle of that road, walking. It was Saturday, no transportation. There was no transportation because in Israel it is Shabbat, Saturday. The buses didn't run. There were no taxis, no telephone. We were walking and my wife started to get pain. We didn't know what to do. I couldn't get a taxi because no way in Israel was there taxi at that time of day, and no buses running. So, we started walking for 20 minutes to the hospital, and it was already getting dark. We came to the hospital and

we went in, and the nurse checked my wife, and she says, "It's not due yet. You have to go home." What can you do? She has pain and they said it's not time. After Shabbat, in the evening, the buses did go, let's say, from seven till nine. Still the last bus to Ra'anana was almost nine o'clock. We got the last bus and we went home.

Then, the next day when we're home, she got pain again. So, what do we do? We didn't have anything, nobody to help us. We walked to the bus. It took us to the hospital. And then it was a problem again. The nurse didn't want to believe my wife. But with crying and talking, she kept my wife overnight, and that's what happened. The baby was born. That night and the next day, it was raining terribly. We couldn't go visit her. My sister came from Tel Aviv to see her. We couldn't go to see her because it was raining so hard. But it calmed down. The rain stopped and we went. We saw the baby, and he was a healthy baby. And they kept Bela for eight days. That was the rule in Israel that time. They kept the mothers for eight days.

And then came time to take home the baby with my wife. So, the same thing. We went home with the bus. And she got in the room that we waited for so long. We had a bed in the room, a pull-out bed. And we had the baby's bed. We had to wash the diapers, cook the diapers. There were no diapers like now, you buy and throw away. We had to wash them and clean them and

dry them to use them again. And we were living like that for maybe five months more. And that's what we had, a room – only a room. And shower and toilet, we had to use with the owner of the house. You can imagine how life was.

And meantime, my wife got some money from the Germans, so we could afford to buy an apartment. One person had four units, so he divided and sold by the unit. We bought a unit in Ra'anana – two bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom with a bathtub. Oh, so we were already lucky.

And life goes on. But there was not enough work for me. In the meantime a war was coming (1956 Sinai Campaign). They took me to the army, and then they released me for a while. Everybody had to give a month a year service to the army (reserves). And it was a little better. We had enough food. We had enough room.

In 1956 we bought a small corner market with a partner. It was just a small room. Bela worked there and I went to buy the stock. And it was just a problem to get enough work.

So, one day, we sat down and we talked it over, what to do – to move to Tel Aviv or to go to America? We got papers from the American Consul that I could go to America because we registered many years before. It just came out the same time that we got the apartment. And it came that I could go to America, only me. Why

only me? Because they only allow to go with a Green Card if you have in America a brother or a sister or parents. I could go to America. I had a brother, but my wife had to stay in Israel for another ten months or more with my son. My son was already four or five years. And I could go to America. We couldn't decide. And we waited for a while to decide.

So, I came to the conclusion that I would go to America to my brother. So, meantime, it took a while till all got setup, how to go, with airplanes and the boats. So, I decided, I took my suitcase, we got only \$10 to take out of Israel. They didn't let you take out more money. And I'm going to America. To my brother Meyer.

First I went to Paris. I had a sister in Paris, Natka. She was also a refugee, a survivor, and I came to her sometime in 1958 in May. I was staying a whole month in her house, till I got on.

Then I had to take from Paris a ship, Queen Mary. I come to my brother (in New York). This was in July 15th I arrived. We had bad times on the ship. It was wavy, a lot of waves. And okay, my brother came to the ship, picked me up, and we were happy, everything. And then he took me home. We had to take a subway or a bus. It took a while to take us to his house. When I came to his house, I got sick from seeing what's going on. I saw that it was so hot that day, and all the kids running around in their underwear. They opened the

fire hydrant. There was water running around. And I said to myself, is this going to be America? I got scared. So, I am already in New York. What can I do?

I come up to his apartment. He was in America about ten years and he lived in a poor area, and we came up and his house was hot. He had a little air conditioner in the window. It was not cooling all over. He told me he had a bed. The bed was in a closet. They took off the doors and put in a bed, and that was supposed to be my room to sleep. It was hot, okay. It was getting to be night. I went to sleep. I was sweating, all my body was wet. And I said, oh my goodness. What did I do? Where am I?

So, then starts to be morning. They took me around a little, and that was to show me New York, the better areas, and at the time, they took me to a market, a clothing market. They bought me a suit. And I was resting for a while, miserable and afraid. I came without a language, without a profession. And now we're talking about looking for a job. What do I do? Somebody told me there's an office that they are looking for people for work. I came to the place and started explaining that in Israel I worked with shellac to finish furniture, and here, they spray with lacquer. So, he gave me an address to Coney Island and I went there. They did what I did. They made the finished cabinets, TV cabinets, and they had to be stained and put in the room from spraying lacquer. And I survived

the day, and they told me, "You can come back, but it's \$1 an hour you're getting paid." Well, I decided better than nothing. I took the job and I was staining those cabinets all day, until they got in the finishing room. I left something like a month or three weeks. They laid off some people already because they got slow. I was between the first ones to get laid off.

Now what? I came back crying. I didn't want to show my brother that I'm scared and upset. So, I looked around for work. Nowhere could I get work. So, I wrote to my wife, that I want to come back to Israel and I can't adjust myself. I was then 30 years old. What I do, what I do? I was very upset? And it took a month or two, it started to get cold already, from July till September, October, getting cold. I couldn't take the cold either. And a whole combination. I then I said to myself, I have a friend who left from Israel to go to Los Angeles. He lived in Los Angeles.

So, I decided I will go visit in Los Angeles. Work I didn't have, so I decided to go to Los Angeles. I got only the address and a little suitcase with two shirts, pair of pants, a jacket, and I bought a ticket on the train to go to L.A. I went on the train. It took four days and four nights to get to Los Angeles. I arrived to Los Angeles on the train, and then what? I have only a piece of paper with the address, no telephone, nothing. And by the train station, I look around what I do, how to find, where to go to my friend. So, I went to the bus station.

I got to the station and asked the driver if he'd look at that piece of paper with the address. He looked up on maps and this, all the routes and the way to get to the place. So, he found a street and gave me a number of the bus that I can reach the street, Hayworth, in West Hollywood. So, I took the bus. It was already three o'clock, four o'clock in the evening. I came to the street. He let me out. I asked him to tell me where to get off, and I got off, got off the bus, and I went walking to the number of the house. My friend lived in a two bedroom.

He was also not happy. And I said, "I'm here." "Oh," he said, "okay, you're here. What are you looking for?" I said, "Maybe I settle here." Things were a little easier. I came to a place where they gave me the address to go to the Jewish Federation. They give me some addresses to go to work. What is the work? I will take anything that I could find. So, they sent me also now to a store, that was an upholstery store. They did all the remodeling to recover new materials on the sofas. And then there was a little wood to be polished with lacquer, and I did some. And I didn't know if he was happy or not, because it was not my profession. And he kept me a few days. I don't know, three or four days. He gave me a good salary, but he said, "I don't need you." And so, I had already a few dollars, I came home again. I knew my wife was supposed to come to America in 1959, because she couldn't come with me together. I had to

go only myself. That was the way, and I wasn't ready to welcome her. But anyway, I pushed this to the side and I started looking for work again.

Then I went through a couple, two, three months, and then I got a job, they sent me to downtown Los Angeles on 6th Street. It was a store, a cabinet shop, they also did fixing up new barber shops. And they did some cabinets, cabinets for the barber shop. I told them, I know cabinet work. He started showing me how to put together a cabinet and then cover it with Formica. I never worked with Formica, but we did it together. He showed me how to put the glue and the Formica on the cabinets. We did the cabinets and then we put the Formica. And I caught on very fast, putting on the Formica. We trimmed the Formica, and sanded it down smooth. You know, that kind of work. And then I worked maybe five months and I got paid \$600 a week, five and a half days a week. I was already happy, because it was what I could make. But meantime, I learned the profession and then my wife came.

My wife and son came in 1959 around March. They also came to New York with the ship, an Italian ship, from Israel. From Italy, they took the ship. And they came to New York. My brother was not happy that I came to America and I left him and New York. But, somehow he agreed to pick up my wife and kid. My kid was only seven years old, when they came. I arranged through a travel office, that she would get some money, pocket

money. I think I remember, \$30, and a ticket to come to L.A. So, he took care of that. After one week, he took my wife and kid, and he put them on the airplane so they could come to Los Angeles. She came to Los Angeles. I had a friend there. He took me to pick them up. They came around late, 11 o'clock in the night. He took me to the airport. Before she came, I already rented an apartment with one bedroom and used furniture and a refrigerator. And when they came, we had already a one-bedroom apartment, and we were happy again.

And then I went back to my work, kept working. My wife was very good with the money. She had a way to do that. She took one week salary for rent, one week salary for food, one week salary for insurance and car expenses, and one for clothing and other things. We lived like that. My son went to school. It was across the street. He started school. The kids didn't like him because he couldn't speak English, and it was very bad, coming home crying. But he was a strong guy and didn't let the kids push him around. And then came vacation. He got off two months. My wife also found a little job at Max Factor. We left the boy, not a little kid, to play in the house. We left him and she went to work. And it was going on like that for two months. After the vacation, he went back to school. He knew already good English and the teacher called my wife. He said, "What happened to that kid? There's a big difference in the two months." So, he was happy that the kids

didn't bother him and he was happy and everything was okay. And then starts again, how to make a better living. It was much easier than New York. I was used to live in hot places like Italy and Israel this was good weather.

Weeks and months went by. I got a little more confident, and I went to the union, the carpenters union, and I asked for a job. They gave me an address. The address was at Manchester and Firestone. The place was called Nord Showcase, this was a little factory, a cabinet factory. I could only buy used cars then. They gave me trouble. But I couldn't go anywhere by bus, I could never make it, because it was far away. And I got there with my car, I came to the office and they asked me questions, this, that. I said I just came from Europe and I will have to have a little experience how to work in America. But what they did, work for the banks. They did all the partitions, desks, and teller booths. They did a lot of Formica. So, I said, here I am home already. I know what Formica work is. And they gave me a project, start working, have more confidence. We built partitions and I put Formica and I knew how to clean up, and we accomplished. As the days went months and months, I got to work and I was happy. I got paid nicely from the union work job and, well, then it's okay.

I wasn't lucky with cars, like I said. I bought a used car and it gave me trouble, always. When it was raining,

I couldn't start the car. So, I changed the car for a Cadillac, a used one. It gave me the same problem. I fixed and fixed. I put in transmission. I spent more money that I could have bought a new car with the money. But anyway, we survived somehow, and I went and I bought a new car. It was a Plymouth Fury III and I was already happy. I could go to work without spending, wasting time on the old cars.

In the meantime, my wife got pregnant, and in 1960 my second son was born. We already had friends and it was a different life. So, my child was born in 1960 and passed by a month or two. The landlord came to me. He said, "In one bedroom, we can't hold two kids." Oh my goodness. I said, now again. We can't have two kids in the one bedroom. Okay, so a new problem. So, we started running around. Wherever we came, we said we are two adults and two children. "No, we don't rent for children."

But we found a place in Crenshaw Village in Los Angeles. They built a new apartment complex. Lots of units. So, a lot of refugees lived there, and also they came new from Europe. And they didn't care as long you sign for a year. So, we rented one bedroom. The kids lived in the bedroom and we lived in the living room. We had a couch and we pulled out the bed from the couch, and we lived like that a year.

Meantime we tried to find apartments in the city, in Los Angeles. We left also to go and look for something. They didn't have anything to rent. We had a little money from what we sold in Israel, the furniture and we had two-bedroom apartment there. And we sold that, so we had some money.

It was around '63, '64. 'We bought a four-unit and we moved in one of the four units. It was also a fixer upper. I already knew how to do things, like we needed windows to replace, kitchen cabinets. Lots of things to be done. And I came from work, and I always spent two hours after work doing work in the house. And so it was going on, going on a few years again. And we looked for something else. We sold the four units. We made a little profit and we looked for something else to buy.

Then we bought a single home. It was also run down. It was a fixer upper. And we moved in to that home. It was a two bedroom. And the kitchen was bad, the floors were bad, and the walls were cracking. And we had to do a big, big job. So, the same thing, we took away one bedroom, locked it up to remodel. We used only one bedroom and the living room. And the kitchen we used it so far. And we started remodeling one bedroom first, whatever it needed, plaster and painting. I learned to be a painter and plumber, electrician by myself. And I did everything we needed. So, we fixed up one bedroom. We moved in and fixed our bedroom, and we

took another bedroom. We fixed it up also. And then we did the kitchen. I had a garage, so I bought us a table saw, and I made a new kitchen – painted, fixed the windows, and also fixed the plaster. And then I went in the living room. The dining room there was not much to fix. And we fixed everything complete. Took months and months. And we lived awhile and we looked to sell the home. It took the while. We sold the single house. It was, I think, about '67 or something that year.

And we sold the house, the home, and we bought an eight unit. We took loans and this and that. I was scared, and I was always worried how we're going to pay the mortgage if I lose the job or something. But anyway, my wife helped out. She worked a little, too. I also did some work. It was a little newer building, so there wasn't too much work to do. But if there was a vacancy, after work I had to clean the toilets, the oven, and the paint by myself – after work. Everything after work. So, we had this eight units and was full except for the two bedrooms upstairs. And we made two units into one. Making two one-bedroom units into one two-bedroom unit. I remodeled that, pushed the walls, pushed this. I removed one kitchen and I made a little room. The other bedroom, the kitchen, I made a kitchen. We had to move the stove and move around things. And we moved into the two bedrooms, and the kids were going to school. I was happy for them because I didn't have the opportunity to go in school because the war with

the Germans. They didn't allow us to go in schools. So, we were happy again.

And we had already friends. A lot of survivors were living in Los Angeles and there were a lot of clubs, the Lodzer Club, the Thirty-Niner survivors club, and many more. We joined the clubs, two clubs, and we always made parties and New Year parties. We used to make dinners for people, started playing cards. And it was a different story.

We traveled in the '70s. We tried to go to Europe, to Israel for vacation. We went to Mexico. We went to Italy, to Holland, to Belgium, Sweden, and Norway. And we went to Czechoslovakia. They had a cure for arthritis. We took the cure. It was 21 days for cure. We got all kinds of cures. And we came home and everything was fine. And then we started enjoying life.

I was already not working on the job because the owner lost the business. The son took over from his father the business and he didn't know how to do business, so he lost it. He went bankrupt or something. Anyway, and we were laid off, and since then I didn't work in a job for anybody. Always did work in my building. There was always to do plumbing, electric, and I kept doing that.

So, we reached the 1960's. I always was busy working. I don't know myself how I got energy after so many years in concentration camps. I worked almost ten

hours a day. But it was good times. We enjoyed it and we make trips, and we had friends a lot and we were together, making parties. We traveled. So, years went by and we reached the year 1977. It was a happy year. My two sons graduated. David, the older one, was finishing doctor, and Joey, the younger one, finished high school and prepared to go to college at UCLA. And we were so happy for them because I didn't have the opportunity to go to school because the Germans denied us. And I didn't have an education. So, we were very so happy for the kids, that we see that they at least educated, and I had to put up with what I had. And later, couple months later, my David, the doctor, he got married. He moved out to Fresno, and everybody did fine. And the younger, Joey, he was accepted to Harvard and he went to Harvard school. And at least we see that they had an education. And it was going on. The years were not bad. We came to some capital and we reached to have everything that we needed, what we lost, everything what we lost when we were kids.

We reached '94. '94 was a year not so good for me because there was a big earthquake and my new apartment building in the San Fernando Valley was damaged, and all the tenants moved out and I had to work a whole year to remodel back the building to be rented. And that's what...how goes life. And I also worked... Then I worked very hard and I was then 63 years old, and I was working whole day there, helping to remodel the

apartment. And what can I tell you? That looks like how it goes. And we fixed up the building. We slowly took time until we rented out again and was all kind of complications, and we had to put up with that. That was...looks like my luck.

But the years went by again and a very bad thing happened to my wife in 1999. She was sick. She went to the doctors for months and months. One day, give her this pill, this pill, that pill. Was so bad, they made tests on the upper GI. They found out that she has cancer in the stomach. You imagine how...what was going on. Yeah, and so soon we knew that this is the problem, so we went to a surgeon. We decided with the surgeon to do the operation. We made a date. And everybody came to the hospital, waiting to see the results from the cancer. But after they finished the operation, the doctor...the surgeon came out and he gave us the bad news that she has cancer. The whole stomach was removed and still it was around the walls, cancer. You imagine what we went through. And she was only 68. And then after the operation, she was in the hospital, and she couldn't eat. She had to be fed by two tubes. And she was in the hospital or at home for six months. And I was sleeping in the hospital to see that she is comfortable. But I noticed, when we rang the bell when she has pain or be changed, it took an hour or half hour sometimes for the nurses to come to help me. Well, I didn't see that's going to be okay, so I took over the

job. When she cried and when she was uncomfortable, so I had already learned how to do the changing the linens and the pajamas. And so was going on months and months and months. And so what can I tell you? And I always did to see that she's comfortable.

And in meantime in 1999, while I'm in hospital, I went through another disaster that my two sisters died that same year. The one died September, one October, and my wife died November. You can imagine that I lost three lovely people – sisters and my lovely wife Bela. Yeah, we... And so what can I tell you? With the time... Took time until we got used to it. And the pain was big – pain for me, for the kids. And so months went by. We got adjusted. And I tried to live alone without somebody being with me. And times was very hard for me, but I still had friends what we got together, play cards. They made coffee and cake, and was a little lighter. But it wasn't good. A year passed by and I decided to live alone, not to have a partner anymore. And that's what it was.

In 2000, I was 70 years old, and in the end of 2000 I went to my urologist for a regular checkup. He came with bad news, that I have cancer of the prostate. We talked about what we can do to get over it. So, we came up with that he also was a surgeon. Well, he told me all those things. I hardly understood that much. I called up my son, the doctor. He lived in Visalia. He has the practice there. So, he came down and I made appointment with

Dr. Danoff he was he a urologist. And they talked it over. They understood each other more than I did. And then we decided to go get a second opinion, and my son, David, had all kind friends of doctors there. And there was a group that used seed implants. And we decided that we're going to go through with that, and we made also appointment. One morning I got to the hospital and they did all the procedures with the seed implants. And that took two days. I got up and it wasn't painful. And I made a few visits, maybe two or three, and it was over. I didn't have any complication.

At the same time, my daughter-in-law had a baby, and I couldn't hold him for a second because I had radiation in my body. So, I had to wait four, five months to get actually a little bit to hold my baby, my grandson. We were so happy because we are such a small family. I want to have more, more grandchildren.

And what can I, guys, tell you? I have reached 88 years old, and today is 2017 and I still drive and I make doctor appointments. I do three meals a day to prepare for food and I shop. And I'm still moving around, but the only thing is so many years I decided then that I'm going to live alone, and that was my mistake because it's so lonesome life. But what can I do? That was my luck. Now I live in a nice house – three bedroom, three bathrooms. And what is good about it if I'm not happy? And I will see what's going to keep coming with the time again. I'm going to finish my writing, recording.

I didn't have good years since I born. Okay. Bye to everybody, and someday somebody will read this and see what a person could go through in a lifetime to reach 88 years old, what he has to go through life. And okay. Goodnight and goodbye. I will come back if there's something I remember because I probably missed a lot of stuff to tell, but I'm a little bit forgetful. And it was very, very bad, especially in the concentration camps. I lived on a piece of bread in the evening, maybe 80 grams, and lunchtime I had a bowl of soup, maybe one potato. And that was four or five...four and a half years. And the hunger and wet, cold... I can't everything to tell. Okay, bye. Goodnight.

Now comes year 2017, and we lost with the time friends that we had from the...survivors. Then we were left very few, still few survivors. And goes by the days so lonesome, lonely. My younger son, Joe, had two grandchildren, Bailey and Amanda. I go once a week to visit them. It makes me a little happy. My older son, David; his son Benjamin had a new son, Zev, in November 2016 and I met him once and was able to hold him But otherwise, I'm alone, alone, alone.

The Cislowski Family in Poland

Father ~ David Yaakov

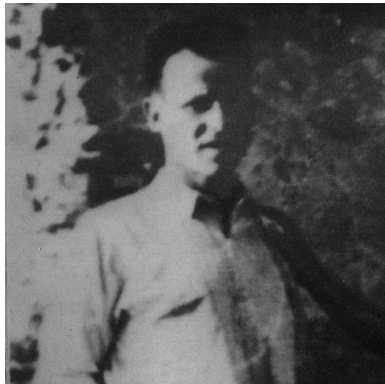
Mother ~ Chaya Rayla

Both killed during the war

Brother ~ Meyer Moved to New York



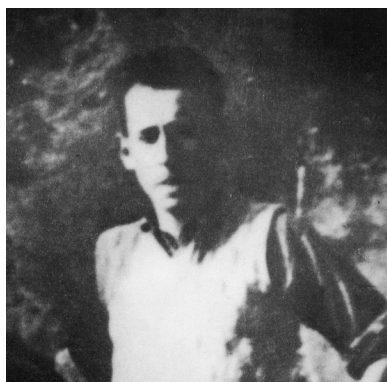
Brother ~ Avram Killed during war



Sister ~ Ruzhka Moved to Tel Aviv



Brother ~ Aaron Killed during war



Sister ~ Natka (Nata) Moved to Paris



Anczel (Anschel)



Anczel (Anschel) Aged 87

